



# BUG NEWS

ATARI BOISE USERS GROUP  
AN INDEPENDENT ATARI USERS GROUP

JULY  
1987

## SUMMER CES NEWS

By Jack Weaver, BUG NEWS Editor

The 1987 Summer Consumer Electronics Show, held in Chicago in early June had a few surprises for fans of Atari computers, both 8- and 16-bit. There were many new releases from third-party suppliers and more news on the current status of recently-announced (and, in some cases, long-awaited) Atari products. Here's the latest in Atari CES news, compiled from several sources:

### 8-BIT UPDATE

First the bad news--it definitely appears that the 8-bit 3 1/2" disk drive is down the tubes, primarily due to the less-than-enthusiastic reaction of third-party software developers to the smaller format. In its place, Atari plans to introduce the XF551, a true-double-density, two-sided 5 1/4" disk drive said to be nearly three times faster than the Atari 1050. OSS, developers of DOS 2.0 and DOS 2.5 is working on ADOS, a disk operating system compatible with single-, enhanced-, and double-density. Look for the XF551 to start hitting the stores by July, according to Atari. The long-awaited XEP80 80-column plug-in module and the SX212 1200 baud modem likewise should be on the market in July. "AtariWriter P-80" was being shown. Keith Ledbetter, author of the various versions of "Express!" public domain terminal software demonstrated a new version written for the SX212. No word as to whether the new "Express!" will support the XEP80, though. The new XE Game System was on display. The Game System will include a joystick, a light-gun, and ROM-based versions of "Missile Command," "Flight Simulator II" (the 128K FS2 cartridge combines the program and scenery, which are on separate disks in the older disk-based versions,) and something called "Bug Hunt." (Sounds like a game where the players try to figure out when and where BUG holds meetings in the summertime, right?) Good news for 8-bitters interested in desktop publishing. Springboard Software is in the process of porting its popular "Newroom" software over to the Atari 8-bit line. According to company president John Paulson, this is a direct result of Atari owners asking for support for their machines. Keep those cards and letters coming, folks! Other new 8-bit products shown or announced at the Summer CES include: "Animation Station" from Suncom, a touch tablet with software; the first authorized computer version of "Dungeons and Dragons" from SSI; "Video Title Shop," which creates graphics or text titles for VCR tapes, from Datasoft; "Alternate Reality--The Dungeon," also from Datasoft; "Virtuoso," a music and graphics storyboard system; and two new titles for the 2600 game machine from Activision, "Kung Fu Master" and "Commando."

### ST UPDATE

A new memory upgrade for Atari STs was demonstrated by Micro D from Canada. Available in 2 and 4 Mb versions, the board installs without any soldering and will sell for \$159, not including RAM

chips (\$30 each from Micro D; the 2 Mb board requires 16 RAM chips and the 4 Mb board needs 32.) Hybrid Arts showed their "ADAP Soundtrack" digital sampling system. The \$1995 MIDI-based system will download selections from any audio tape and allow the user to manipulate the sounds however he wants, using the keyboard or mouse. Passport Designs announced an ST version of their "Master Tracks Pro" MIDI 64-track sequencer. This is currently a hot item among Apple Macintosh owners. According to ANTIC ONLINE, Passport people at the show reported that three out of four visitors to their booth wanted "Master Tracks Pro" on the ST instead of the Mac. Springboard demo'd their "Certificate Maker" program. The program was ported over to the ST from MS-DOS versions, which have been selling like hotcakes. "3D Breakthrough," Shelbourne System's new maze game using Sterotek's 3D Glasses, was a popular attraction for showgoers. A two-dimension version is included on the disk for those who don't have 3D Glasses. Salina, Kansas-based Xetec introduced a user-friendly, yet powerful, drafting and drawing program called "SCAD." The program sells for less than \$100 and comes on a non-copy-protected disk. Included is a utility to convert "SCAD" images to a "DEGAS" format. Speaking of CAD for the ST, "MasterCAD 3D" was shown. The program is currently available only for 1 Meg monochrome STs, sells for \$199, and comes from Venezuela. Marketing plans for sales in the United States are being finalized. SciSys of London showed two versions "ST ChessBase," a specialized database program for the serious chess buff. U.S. distribution was in its final stages at the CES. Another English company, Psygnosis (the creators of "Brataccas") introduced "Barbarian," their new adventure game. "ComputerEyes," the popular video digitizer, showed their new, inexpensive (\$149.95) monochrome version for the Atari ST. Unison World is working on a fonts and borders disk for "PrintMaster Plus." The price has not been announced yet. Mindscape showed two new games: "Q-Ball," a 3D billiards games, and "Plutos," a space shoot-em-up. Electronic Arts has been busy. New EA titles for the ST include MIDI-based "Music Construction Set," "MathTalk," and "Empire," a diplomacy strategy game. Logical Design Works has three new games out for the ST: "Club Backgammon," "Vegas Craps," and "Vegas Gambler," which combines blackjack, roulette, slot machine and poker machine games. Each sells for \$34.95. Jagware of Canada is working on its "Alien Fires" 3D maze game (color STs only, no mono yet.) This is their first venture into the ST software market.

### MISCELLANEOUS ATARI-RELATED NEWS

Avatex is coming out with a 2400 baud modem to augment its line of low-priced telecommunications hardware. Suggested retail is \$319, but Avatex products can usually be found at considerably discounted prices.

Atari announced at CES that first quarter sales were up 45% from the same period last year. They also announced a 2-for-1 stock split in the company's common stock. After these news releases, the price of Atari stock went up \$5 overnight, breaking \$30 per share for the first time since the company went public last November.



# EDITOR'S DESK

A problem that plagues a lot of Atari users groups is apathy. A month doesn't go by that we don't get at least one newsletter, out of the thirty or so groups with whom we exchange newsletters, with a plaintive plea for more involvement from their members. They threaten consequences that range from ceasing to publish a newsletter to completely disbanding the users group.

BUG, as I've mentioned before in this space, has, to a considerable extent, been spared this lack of interest. Yes, there have been a few times when it seemed like all we would have to print in BUG NEWS was the time and place of next month's meeting. And, to be sure, downloads from the BUG BBS have outnumbered uploads by a ratio of about 20 or 30 to 1 for the last couple of years. But, due primarily to the efforts of a handful of dedicated BUG members, we have not only managed to weather the doldrums, but have maintained one of best-known and respected users groups in the Western United States. And, hopefully, BUG has been a source of information, entertainment and support to all BUG members.

Since BUG's inception some five or six years ago, Art and Kathy Bross have given their all to BUG and the Atari "cause." Among myriad other contributions, Art has variously--and often simultaneously--performed such duties as newsletter editor (mighty big shoes to fill, as I found out the hard way,) BBS SysOp (the only one we've ever had,) and meeting coordinator/chairman/cleanupafterwards person. Kathy, in addition to helping Art in the execution of his duties, has, until recently, run most of the software raffles at our meetings and managed the BUG pursestrings. Last November and December, she spent much time and energy helping to make the First An(n)ual (Sorry, Nick, I just couldn't resist.) Atari Boise Users Group Holiday Dinner a big success; indeed, without her efforts, the whole thing probably would not have come off at all. If BUG were likened to an internal-combustion engine, I feel safe in saying without fear of contradiction that the Brosses have been our spark plug.

Now, with great sadness, I must report that it appears Art and Kathy will be leaving Boise to pursue career opportunities in Denver. And we're going to miss them a hell of a lot. As I mentioned earlier, whatever success BUG has had in the past, is due to the efforts of a handful of people. Take away Art and Kathy, and we've got a very small handful left. In fact, I'd venture to guess that unless we get a lot more volunteer help from a lot more BUG members, our club may not be around a year from now. And, as if things aren't looking bleak enough already, Art and Kathy are leaving in mid-summer, which is, of course, the prime season for users group apathy. Our librarians need help, we'll need someone to take over as SysOp, we need a treasurer, we need public domain submissions for the Disk of the Month, and, as always, we need

material for the newsletter. It wouldn't take a lot of time to maintain BUG's vitality, if everyone contributed just an hour or each month to one of our ongoing projects.

We've had several people who were formerly very active in our users group, but who've since ceased all but minimal participation, largely due to "burn-out." That, along with Art and Kathy leaving, may force us to pay the price for letting "George"--or in our case, Art--do it. For too long, we've relied on too few.

But I've digressed--yes, we'll miss all the Brosses have done for us. But the main reason many of us will miss them (including yours truly) is not their countless contributions to our users group, nor even the help they have given to us individually. Atari computers and the Boise Users Group aside, they have become good friends to many of us. We've had some great times, and a good many laughs together. I'm not going to let them go until they promise to stop at my house whenever they get back to Boise, and to log onto the BUG BBS at least once a month, if for no other reason than to say "Hi." (Kathy, don't take the job unless Ma Bell gives you a year's worth of free long-distance; it'll take that long to wean Art off the board!)

On behalf of the Atari Boise Users Group, I want to say a heartfelt thank you, Art and Kathy, for all you've given us. You take with you our best wishes for all the future holds in store for you. Denver's gain is definitely BUG's loss.

--Jack Weaver, BUG NEWS Editor

WELCOME  
NEW BUG NEWS  
ASSISTANT EDITOR



MATTHEW HARRIS WEAVER  
BORN JUNE 3, 1987  
8 LBS. 2 OZ.



\*\*\*\*\* BUG NEWS ST SOFTWARE REVIEW \*\*\*\*\*  
**NEOCHROME** from ATARI CORP.  
 \*\*\*\*\* By RANDY LINK \*\*\*\*\*

there an artist that is inside of you struggling to get out? Well, if there is then Atari has come up with an excellent painting program called NEOCHROME for your Atari ST computer. With this program you can paint pictures AND animate them as well. Once you have finished a "painting" it can be saved on a disk and, by using the slide show program, you can display your artistic creations for your friends and family.

There is a selection of 512 colors that you can choose from to paint with although you can only display 16 colors on your canvas at a time. You are also given different tools to paint with. These include a pencil, a paint brush with 38 brush tips of varying sizes and shapes, and a spray can with 38 different nozzles of differing shapes and sizes. Also included is a paint bucket which is useful for filling large areas with color. There is an eraser that can be used either to erase individual mistakes, or the entire canvas. The program also has many special features that make drawing easier, such as a set of pre-programmed shapes (circles, squares, rectangles, etc., either filled or unfilled.) For those of us who have trouble drawing a straight line, NEOCHROME will even do that for you automatically!

Anything drawn on the canvas can be cut out of the drawing by using the jackknife tool. Once cut out it can be stored in a buffer for later use or placed on the canvas in a different spot. It can also be rotated or inverted (flip-flopped) and be placed in front of or behind whatever else is on the canvas. Areas on the canvas can be expanded or shrunk, or stretched in any direction. Text can also be added to your painting with many different styles and sizes of lettering.

Painting is done with the mouse. To begin painting, first select the tool that you want to paint with (brush, spray can, paint bucket, or pencil) from the tool and option boxes that are displayed in the bottom half of the screen. Then select from the color palette the color that you want to paint with. The color palette consists of the 16 colors that you will be using on the canvas and is displayed above the tool and option boxes. You can keep the color palette and tools at the bottom half of the canvas and work on half of your painting at a time, or you can choose to have the canvas fill the entire screen. Using the mouse will move the selected tool onto the canvas and as soon as the left hand button on the mouse is pressed, you will begin to paint.

One of the features that I particularly like about this program

is the option of animating your paintings, using a technique called color cycling. Color cycling is when you replace one color with another, and using this technique you can give a waterfall the illusion of motion by simply causing the colors that make up the water cycle through different shades of blue. You can make a sphere seem to rotate by using this method also. This makes any painting much more visually exciting.

There are things about this program that I did not like, though. While you can choose from 512 colors, you can only put sixteen of them on your canvas--fourteen if you exclude black and white. You can replace any color on the color palette with one of the 512 other colors, but if you replace a color that you have already used to paint with on the canvas then whatever you have painted with will be replaced by the new color, too. For example, if you have used blue to paint an ocean and then replace blue on the color palette with red, you will suddenly have a red ocean! Another problem is that all diagonal lines tend to be jagged because the pixels that make up the video monitor screen are rectangular. There is a technique to smooth out these "jaggies" but it is very time consuming. In many painting programs it is very easy to place a circle in the exact spot where you want it to be. This is done by defining where you want the center of the circle to be and then defining how big you want it. Using NEOCHROME it is much, much harder to place a circle exactly where you want it. This is because you cannot predefine where the center of the circle is to be. To make a circle using NEOCHROME, you first select it from the pre-programmed shapes. Then using the mouse you move the cursor onto the canvas and press the left button. While holding the left button down, move the mouse and this causes the circle to "grow" next to the cursor until it reaches the size you want. This makes it impossible to determine where the center of the circle will finally wind up at. Despite these problems I think it is still a great program for its price. The ability to animate paintings by using the color cycling technique more than makes up for these problems.

NEOCHROME is a nice program to play with and can be useful in making graphs and illustrating reports. For those of you who have a Wyeth or Rembrandt lurking inside yourself, this is just the program you need. More information about NEOCHROME can be obtained by writing: ATARI CUSTOMER RELATIONS, P.O. BOX 61657, Sunnyvale, CA 94088. I bought my copy for \$29.95.

BUG NEWS is published monthly by the Atari Boise Users Group (BUG) for BUG members. BUG is an informal group of Atari computer owners and is not affiliated with Atari Corp. Membership dues are \$20 per year, which supports this newsletter, the club's public domain library, and the BUG BBS. Articles contained herein are considered to be in the public domain unless otherwise noted, and may be reprinted provided that the author and the originating newsletter are credited. Articles, including appropriate illustrations, are so. and may be submitted by uploading them to the BBS (phone (208) 383-9547--please use ".BUG" as filename extension for all uploads.) Text for articles written on an 8-bit Atari and submitted by mail should be on a 5.25"

floppy disk, if possible, and mailed to: BUG NEWS, c/o Jack Weaver, 2827 Christine Street, Boise, ID 83704. Articles written on an Atari ST should either be uploaded to the BUG BBS, or copied on a 3.5" disk and mailed to Art Bross, 1030 El Pelar, Boise, ID 83702. Please use a word processor that generates output in ASCII, such as AtariWriter, Speedscript 3.0, or ST Writer. All disks sent to BUG NEWS will either be returned or replaced, at our option. We reserve the right to edit all articles submitted. To be included in the newsletter, all submissions must be received no later than the 15th of the month prior to publication.



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BUG WANTS

C/O JACK WEAVER  
2827 CHRISTINE ST.  
BOISE, IDAHO 83704

BUG NEWS

# NO AUGUST MEETING SCHEDULED--NEXT BUG MEETING SEPT. 14

As of press time, there is no BUG meeting scheduled for the month of August. Campus School is not available since Tom Christensen will be out of town. If enough interest is shown at the July meeting, we may be able to put something together for August in another location--we'll need someone to volunteer to make the arrangements.

In any case, we'll let you know in the August edition of BUG NEWS, which we're planning on mailing to all members. Also, stay tuned to the BUG BBS, where we always have information concerning the meeting schedule posted among the logon messages.

Another possibility is that some members may feel inclined to get together on an informal basis. If so, why not sit down afterwards, and write a brief note to BUG NEWS and share the highlights with the rest of us.

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SEPTEMBER

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED  
MEETING: MONDAY, SEPT. 14,  
6:30 P.M. AT CAMPUS SCHOOL

ARTRONICS		
208-342-1111		
Items in stock- Need to clear		
For the ST	List	Disc.
1 Set TOS ROMchips	-99.95	- 73.00
3.5" disk cleaner	-19.95	- 16.00
Chestmaster 2000	-39.95	- 32.00
Compute Your Roots	-39.95	- 32.00
DBDD 3.5" 10 pak	-24.95	- 13.00
BSDD 3.5" 10 pak	-14.95	- 12.00
Flight Simulator	-49.95	- 40.00
Mean 18 (golf)	-44.95	- 36.00
MS. EM (IBM emul.)	-69.95	- 54.00
ST SF354 dr. cover	- 9.95	- 8.50
ST monitor covers	-19.95	- 17.50
ST 520 covers	- 9.95	- 8.50
ST 1040 covers	- 9.95	- 8.50
Starfleet	-54.95	- 41.50
Starglider	-44.95	- 36.00
Teakwood disk case	-23.95	- 18.00
B-Bit items	List	Disc.
Chestmaster 2000	-39.95	- 32.00
Teakwood disk case	-32.95	- 25.00
Other items	List	Disc.
Atari 2600 system	-59.95	- 54.00
C. Itoh 75/8510 rib	- 6.95	- 4.75
FX85 Tractor feed	-39.95	- 35.00
MX-100 ribbons	- 8.00	- 6.50
Misc. back issues		
of Analog or Antic	- 3.50	- 2.50
with disk	-12.95	- 10.00
RS232 modem cables	-24.95	- 15.00
TAC 2 Joystick	-13.99	- 10.00

INVENTORY  
LIQUIDATION  
SALE!